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STRENGTHENING OF SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Letter dated 26 April 1994 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the final statement adopted by the Presidential Council of the Arab Maghreb Union at its sixth regular session, held at Tunis on 2 and 3 April 1994.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 70 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Rabah HADID
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/49/50/Rev.1.

Annex

STATEMENT ADOPTED BY THE PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL OF THE ARAB MAGHREB UNION AT ITS SIXTH REGULAR SESSION, HELD AT TUNIS ON 2 AND 3 APRIL 1994

At the invitation of His Excellency President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Head of State of the Republic of Tunisia, and pursuant to articles 4 and 5 of the Treaty instituting the Arab Maghreb Union, the sixth regular session of the Presidential Council of the Union was held at Tunis on 2 and 3 April 1994. It was attended by:

His Excellency President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Head of State of the Republic of Tunisia;

His Excellency President Liamine Zeroual, Head of State of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria;

His Excellency President Maaouya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya, Head of State of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania;

Major Al-Khuwaylidi Al-Hamidi, representing Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, Leader of the Great 1 September Revolution of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya;

His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Karim Lamrani, Prime Minister of Morocco, representing His Majesty King Hassan II.

I

The Council's sixth session was opened by President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali with an address in which he began by welcoming fellow leaders of the Maghreb States and heads of participating delegations.

He went on to state that the Council's meeting reflected the renewed desire that was shared by all to go forward with the course adopted for the Arab Maghreb Union and to make the transition to the stage for concrete action and for giving effect to the decisions already taken. Since the establishment of the Union, the Maghreb peoples had looked to the structure it provided as an ideal vehicle for greater interaction and rapprochement and as a means of ensuring their progress, strength and proper standing among nations. The enormous progress that had been made by the various regional groupings in making their presence felt provided the greatest incentive for making the best possible use of the time factor and for persevering in the continued development of the Union, despite the difficulties encountered in the process, so that it could acquire the importance in the international sphere that was required to safeguard the present and future interests of its States and peoples.

President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali stressed the firm resolve of the Maghreb leaders to pursue the course of unification, noting that Tunisia welcomed the new impetus that the Council's sixth session would provide and the opportunity

it would present for an evaluation of previous stages in the Union's development and in the actual realization of its goals and for the planning of the next steps to be taken. He recalled the advances made in the few years the Union had existed, highlighting in particular the various agreements that constituted a firm and ramified legal foundation, the plans and programmes that had been elaborated and the progress that had been made in establishing major structures and institutions.

In the past year, the Union had been most active in such areas as the close and systematic coordination of the work of all its structures and institutions, and it had focused in particular on the identification of the means necessary to achieve its strategic goals, on the reordering of priorities for joint Maghreb action so as to ensure the achievement of the goals already planned, on a thorough examination of plans relating to the joint development strategy, and on maintaining the emphasis on operational programmes in fields directly affecting the lives of Maghreb citizens.

President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali called attention to the fact that the Arab Maghreb Union offered a suitable framework in which to promote coordination and consultation among political leaders in the Maghreb. This had had the positive effect of lending added impetus to Maghreb diplomacy in establishing new and improved relations between the Union and the different regions with which it had geographical and cultural links or traditional ties and of enhancing the Union's standing in the international arena. He recalled the appeal he had made before the European Parliament for the development of contacts between and among the Arab Maghreb Union, the European Union and the Mediterranean region, based on community of interests, far-reaching cooperation in a framework of partnership, and cultural interchange, with a view to achieving progress, stability and security on both shores of the Mediterranean.

The President said that effort, resolve and potential should be directed into constructive development in the context of a cultural convergence that would contribute to ensuring the appropriate conditions for the settlement of ongoing disputes in many parts of the world and in particular of those relating to issues of security and peace in the region. In this connection, he addressed the issues of the Middle East, of the dispute between the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and a number of Western States, of Somalia and of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

II

President Maaouya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya, Head of State of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, thanked President Yasser Arafat, Head of State of Palestine, for attending the meeting and expressed the hope that the ongoing peace process would result in the Palestinian people securing all of its legitimate rights. He thanked President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and the Tunisian people for the warm reception and generous hospitality provided and commended the achievements made in the development of the Union during the presidential term of the Republic of Tunisia. Mauritania was committed to the objectives of the Union and remained ready to pursue action to realize the Maghreb peoples' goals of integration and unity at a time when regional groupings had become more vitally necessary than ever before. He commended the

efforts of the secretariat and the various organs of the Union and wished the Presidential Council every success in the work of its session.

III

Major Al-Khuwaylidi Al-Hamidi, representing Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, Leader of the Great 1 September Revolution of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, said that the meetings of the current session would strengthen the resolve to defend the inviolability of the new Maghreb homeland, given the strong and deeply rooted historical ties that brought its countries together, the factors of language, religion, neighbourliness, kinship and aspiration that united them, and their unity of purpose and common destiny. He expressed deep appreciation to President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Council's sixth session, and congratulated President Liamine Zeroual on assuming the presidency of Algeria and the presidency of the Council and wished him success in both tasks.

He noted that the Council's current session was being held in extremely critical circumstances in the region that were closely interrelated with international circumstances, and they imposed additional responsibilities that required duty to be done as dictated by the individual and collective challenges. Haste was required in carrying through the development of the Arab Maghreb, and it was necessary to be equal to events and to the aspirations of Maghreb citizens in order to fulfil the objectives of the community as they related to the unity of the Arab Maghreb so that a helping hand could be extended to the Arab Mashreq, a part of which was still under occupation.

Stressing that one of the major challenges facing the Arab Maghreb was the crisis contrived by certain Western countries with the Great Jamahiriya more than two years ago by making use of the Security Council and the Charter of the United Nations, he said, "Let me quietly whisper to you that Libyans have bitter feelings on the Western embargo imposed on them without justification". He concluded his statement by affirming that the Jamahiriya was resolved to proceed with the development of the great Arab Maghreb in the course of achieving global Arab unity from the Atlantic to the Gulf. Such, indeed, was the great spirit of the 1 September Revolution.

IV

Mr. Mohamed Karim Lamrani, Prime Minister of Morocco, conveyed the greetings and wishes of His Majesty King Hassan II to the sixth Maghreb summit. He and his accompanying delegation were happy to be in Tunis, where they had met with the customary welcome and solicitude of a city renowned for its generous hospitality. He took the opportunity to offer the warmest congratulations to President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on the renewal by the proud Tunisian people of its confidence in his discerning leadership and to commend the efforts made by him during his term as President of the Council. Algeria, to which the presidency of the Union would now pass, would be able to contribute once more to giving a new impetus to Union activities.

He concluded his statement by saying that, as was the case in the other countries of the Union, the Kingdom of Morocco under the leadership of His

Majesty King Hassan II had the desire to remain committed to the structure in place, which would provide a suitable framework for collective action to satisfy the development requirements of member countries and meet the challenges that confronted them in dealing with international blocs and with changes at the international level.

V

The Presidential Council then reviewed the items included in the agenda for its session, giving close consideration to the course taken by intra-Maghreb activities since its previous session, to the work of the various organs of the Union and to future prospects in light of present requirements. There were exchanges of views and consultations on the major issues of common interest to the Maghreb countries.

VI. ACTION AT THE MAGHREB LEVEL

The Council heard a report from Mr. Habib Ben Yahya, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia and Chairman of the Union's Council of Foreign Ministers for the sixth presidential session, on progress made in the development of the Union and the results achieved by its organs and institutions, on operational programmes for the forthcoming period in light of the decisions and directives of the Presidential Council, and on the Union's programme of work and current requirements. He gave particular emphasis to the joint programmes implemented in the health, youth welfare, basic education and environmental protection fields and to the start made on planning Maghreb infrastructure.

The Council also heard a report from Mr. Mohammed Ammamou, Secretary-General of the Union, on progress made in developing the Union, on the Union's various achievements and on popular activities in the Maghreb during the sixth cycle. It took note of the work done by the secretariat in pursuit of the Union's objectives and in monitoring action in the field.

The Council expressed its satisfaction with the positive results obtained and with the continuity that action at the Maghreb level had acquired from regular meetings of the specialized organs, ministerial committees and ministerial councils, which had provided outstanding support during the sixth cycle. Such action must be maintained with a view to achieving common objectives, fulfilling the aspirations of the Maghreb peoples for greater concrete achievement and creating the appropriate conditions for the integration that continued to be an ultimate goal for the Maghreb peoples.

The Council took note of the entry into force of five intra-Union agreements since July 1993, which had made available major legal frameworks for integration on the basis of which further progress could be made. At the same time, it called for the completion of ratification procedures for the remaining Union agreements and for the elaboration of the relevant protocols and supplementary and implementing instruments required so as to achieve the planned objectives.

The Council, while reaffirming its commitment to the Union's programme of work, recommends that at the present stage the focus should be on those projects that can be implemented in terms of cost and that have a direct return in terms of the daily lives of Maghreb citizens, and particularly on projects for the development of human resources and of communications and transport services. It calls on the organs of the Union to continue to operate in accordance with this programme, given that it will contribute to strengthening the ties between the peoples of the Union and their future generations and will augment their identification with the Maghreb and with their common destiny.

In its belief that action by the people is important for promoting integration, the Council calls upon the organs of the Union to note the achievements of non-governmental organizations and to make use of their activities and expertise in order to broaden the base of action at the Maghreb level and meet with the aspirations of all sectors, social classes and occupational groups of Maghreb society.

The Council, taking note of what has been achieved in installing the organs of the Union in permanent quarters and expressing satisfaction that premises have been provided for the Consultative Council, the Judicial Organ, the Maghreb Academy of Sciences and the Maghreb University, stresses the need for support to be provided to these institutions and for all necessary steps to be taken for the establishment of the Maghreb Investment and External Trade Bank and for the convening of its founding assembly so that the Union system of institutions may be completed and may contribute to the realization of aspirations for a better tomorrow based on complementarity, unity and integration.

The Council expressed its satisfaction with the role performed by the secretariat, at the present inaugural stage, in preparing for meetings, monitoring activities in the field and seeking sources of project financing, and it stressed the need to provide it with qualified staff from member countries and the financial resources necessary to improve its performance in furthering the Union's objectives and carrying out the tasks entrusted to it.

VII. THE OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Council endorsed the recommendation of the Council of Foreign Ministers concerning operational programmes and the schedule of meetings of the organs of the Union during the seventh presidential cycle and stressed the need to proceed with the implementation of decisions as scheduled. It calls for a meeting of Foreign Ministers and ministers responsible for Maghreb affairs to be held in the course of 1994 to review the most useful ways of imparting a renewed impetus to Union activities in the context of the ongoing evaluation of action at the Maghreb level.

VIII. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

In the context of the Union's sustained endeavours to strengthen its commitment to its Arab, Islamic, African and international environment, the Council notes with satisfaction the programmes of cooperation on which agreement has been reached by the Arab Maghreb Union, on the one hand, and the League of

Arab States, the Arab, Islamic, African and European regional groupings, the Arab and Islamic development funds and the specialized agencies of the United Nations, on the other hand. At the same time, it calls for continued efforts to identify opportunities for cooperation and complementary action, for support to the development process and for solidarity on the basis of a convergence of development concerns and a community of interests.

The Council values the maintenance of the Maghreb-European dialogue at the parliamentary and institutional level and the meetings the Union's Consultative Council has had in this connection with the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Council.

Recalling the invitation extended by the European Parliament to President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, as President of the Council, to address it on the Union's perception of future relations between the two groupings, the Council expresses its endorsement and appreciation of the constructive proposals made on behalf of the Union for the expansion of such relations with a view to ensuring stability, security and peace in the western Mediterranean region and to directing efforts to reconstruction and development.

The Council expressed its readiness to resume the dialogue between the Arab Maghreb Union and the European Union, whether in the "Five plus Five" or "Twelve plus Five" framework, on a basis of reciprocity and mutuality of interests and in keeping with the concept of joint development, the acquired rights of the Maghreb emigrant community and collective responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security on the shores of the Mediterranean so that efforts could be directed to the achievement of overall development and stability.

The Council reaffirms its great concern at the situation of the Maghreb emigrant community residing in the European Union and its desire to conclude a Maghreb-European Charter to ensure the improvement of working and living conditions and guarantee the acquired rights of emigrants. It expresses its profound preoccupation at the escalation of violence directed against that community in light of the worsening manifestations of extremism and violence directed against it, and it urges the European States to adopt determined measures sufficient to eliminate the phenomenon.

IX. DECISIONS

Supplementary to the legal instruments adopted at previous sessions of the Presidential Council and in the endeavour to make available implementing protocols and practical, technical and supplementary instruments, the Council adopted the following agreements and documents:

Agreement on mutual administrative cooperation to prevent customs violations;

Protocol relating to certificates of origin;

Protocol relating to the application of the uniform 17.50 per cent countervailing charge;

Agreement on the establishment of a Maghreb Committee on Insurance and Reinsurance;

Agreement on the exchange of trainees between postal and communications administrations in the countries of the Union;

Agreement on the exchange of experts and specialists between postal and communications administrations;

Agreement on joint film production;

Agreement on the establishment of the Maghreb Council of National Libraries;

Declaration concerning the establishment of the Maghreb Free Trade Area;

Directive No. 8, establishing veterinary health standards;

Ordinance concerning the award of two Arab Maghreb Union prizes in the field of architecture and construction.

The Council also adopted a decision establishing the Maghreb Sports Union and the Maghreb Youth Tourism Agency.

In its belief in the important role entrusted to the Consultative Council and in an endeavour to reinforce it, the Council decided to amend article 12 of the Treaty instituting the Union to increase the number of members of the Consultative Council from 100 to 150, so that there would be 30 members from each member State.

X. POLITICAL CONSULTATION

The Council reviewed the political developments that had taken place in the Maghreb, Arab, African and Mediterranean regions and in the international arena, and it expressed satisfaction that the custom of dialogue and consultation among its members on all matters of common concern had become firmly established. This had made it possible for them to coordinate their positions and had had a positive impact on the support they provided to just causes.

The Council values the efforts made during Tunisia's term as its President to strengthen the Union's regional and international relations and to promote the establishment of international peace and security. It expresses its resolve to maintain its efforts for an international order based on law, international legitimacy, respect for human rights, the propagation of a spirit of cooperation and solidarity among all nations, the repudiation of all manifestations of intimidation, violence and extremism, and commitment to respect for the sovereignty of States and non-interference in their internal affairs so as to promote the firm establishment of peace and stability.

The Council heard a report from the head of the delegation of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on the latest developments in the

ongoing crisis involving the Jamahiriya and a number of Western countries. Recalling the positions adopted at its previous session in solidarity with the Great Jamahiriya, recalling its endeavours to have the embargo lifted, and further recalling the relevant resolutions of the League of Arab States, particularly that adopted at its one hundred and first session calling on the Security Council to take account of the proposal relating to the International Court of Justice at The Hague, the Council expresses its appreciation of the positive initiatives announced by the Great Jamahiriya with a view to devising a just and honourable solution to the crisis in accordance with international laws and covenants.

Expressing its profound concern at the suffering endured by the Libyan Arab people owing to the maintenance of the embargo and its worsening impact and at the damage sustained by the Libyan people and the other peoples of the Maghreb and by the integration process, the Council affirms its resolve to continue its efforts, at the Maghreb level and in the Arab Committee of Seven, for a speedy settlement to the crisis that will mitigate the suffering of the Libyan people and respect its dignity and national sovereignty in accordance with international laws, resolutions and covenants.

Accordingly, the Council entrusts the State exercising its presidency, in coordination with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary-General of the Union, with the task of pursuing efforts with the Security Council to encourage dialogue and negotiations for a just and honourable solution to the crisis that will bring about the lifting of the embargo and remove the dangers of escalation and the build-up of tension, so that the peoples of the region may channel their energies into the development effort and ensure stability and security.

The Council reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian people in its just struggle for the restoration of its legitimate rights and the establishment of an independent State with its capital at Jerusalem and for the right of fraternal Arab countries to the restoration of their occupied territory in accordance with international legitimacy, so that a just, permanent and comprehensive peace would be established in the Middle East. The Council expressed its great concern at the deteriorating situation in the occupied Arab territories owing to the maintenance of the occupation and the repressive measures taken against defenceless civilians. It condemned the repeated criminal assaults against Palestinians and especially the savage massacre at the Haram al-Ibrahimi, which was incompatible with the spirit and principles of peace.

Given that it had a responsibility to foster the peace process, the international community must take practical and urgent measures to ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians under occupation, in accordance with the requirements of the relevant Geneva conventions, and to bring an end to the policy of establishing settlements.

Convinced that the States of the Union have a natural role to play in promoting Arab unity, and desiring to contribute to the fraternal cohesion of the Arab community on the firm foundations of respect for the national sovereignty of all its members, the strengthening of the ties of fraternal

solidarity and the preservation of Arab capacities now and in the future, the Presidential Council reaffirms the commitment of the Maghreb States to the elimination of all sources of disunity and conflict and to the conduct of fraternal and responsible inter-Arab dialogue.

In this connection, further to the efforts made by the Union to contribute to the strengthening of Arab solidarity and in keeping with its appeals for any inter-Arab animosity to be dispelled, the Council renews its commitment to the unity of Iraq and its concern that the suffering of its people should be mitigated. At the same time, it affirms respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State of Kuwait and calls for solutions to be devised that are acceptable to all parties.

In another respect, the Council endorsed the endeavours being made for national reconciliation in Yemen and expressed the hope that concerted efforts would be made by all to preserve the unity and cohesion of the country. The Council entrusts its President, in coordination with the Secretary-General, with the task of communicating the solidarity of the Magreb to the people and leadership of Yemen in the appropriate way and possibly by sending an envoy from the Union.

The Council further expresses the hope that its Somali brothers will make concerted efforts to overcome their differences and to reach a compromise solution that will ensure the unity and territorial integrity of Somalia.

In the matter of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Council expressed its satisfaction at the positive development that had taken place following the agreement reached between the Bosnian Muslims and the Croatians, and it expressed the hope that this would contribute to expediting a definitive resolution of the crisis in such a way as to mitigate the plight of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Welcoming the establishment by the Organization of African Unity of its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and the assumption by the African States of collective responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security and for ensuring respect for legitimacy, the Council urges all States and peoples of the African continent to have recourse to peaceful means in the settlement of disputes so that energies may be channelled into development activities and into ensuring the requirements for a life of dignity for Africans.

The Council notes with satisfaction the positive developments that have taken place in the Republic of South Africa with the agreement of the parties concerned to establish the Transitional Executive Council and adopt a new State Constitution. The Council hopes that the coming elections will take place in an atmosphere of respect for democracy and for the will of the majority so as to ensure the emergence of a unitary, multiracial system that can end racial discrimination and the sufferings of the South African people and inaugurate a new era of freedom and democracy that will guarantee human rights and human dignity in the country.

The Council calls upon the international community to assist and support the development efforts of the African countries and to help solve the debt problem that encumbers them and exhausts the limited resources that they need for economic and social development and the ultimate progress and prosperity of the African peoples.

XI

The Council having completed consideration of the items on the agenda for its session, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali made a statement in which he again expressed Tunisia's pride in having hosted a meeting at which joint Maghreb action, the most useful means of advancing the unification process and the most salient international issues of common interest had been considered and discussed.

He took note with satisfaction of the agreements and decisions adopted by the Council at its current session, the operational programmes it had recommended and the directives it had issued to the organs of the Union. The Maghreb peoples had great regard for the meetings of the Presidential Council and had the hope that they would mobilize the full potential of the Maghreb in order to translate covenants and programmes into concrete action whose results they could see and whose fruits they could enjoy.

President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali recalled his previous statement that the actual application of instruments and of intentions, however exalted and ambitious, remained subject to the resolve and desire to take measures of implementation and to the provision of the appropriate means, so that every step taken was as it were a brick added to a previous one and represented an incentive to expedite subsequent steps until such time as the building of an Arab Maghreb structure without internal borders was complete. Current objective circumstances limited the ability of the Union at the present time to reach its ultimate goals but should not undermine our resolve to focus and combine our efforts to promote the advancement of the Union.

The President commended the general desire to establish a Maghreb Free Trade Area as a first step in the implementation of the Maghreb joint development strategy and stated that every advance in building up the Maghreb as an economic area made the economies of its constituent States stronger and more efficient. He concluded his statement by expressing Tunisia's constant readiness to make the utmost effort to participate actively, in cooperation with its fellow members, in promoting the advancement of the Union and again congratulating President Liamine Zeroual on assuming the presidency of the Union. He was confident that President Zeroual's assumption of that high office would impart greater impetus to the integration process.

XII

President Liamine Zeroual, Head of State of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, said that the Maghreb-level structure was the token of the future for the States of the Union and their peoples. That structure must not, therefore, be the prisoner of passing differences, irrelevant difficulties or

adverse external influences that must be overcome in light of the exalted goal in view.

He added that the unity of the Arab Maghreb, which was a cultural factor and one that made for peace, security, development and growth for all the peoples of the region, required increased faith in the common destiny and in the need for solidarity. Therein lay the challenge that Algeria had accepted and that it would endeavour to meet without hesitation. The development of the Arab Maghreb Union would certainly be more rapid and stronger if it was more in keeping with the national reality of each of its member countries and if such development derived its strength from the integration of their major capabilities, which would require all to show greater sacrifice, self-reliance and objectivity. The historical legacy of the peoples of the region showed that the Arab Maghreb was deeply rooted in its affiliation with the Arab, African and Mediterranean regions, and the destiny of its States was therefore closely linked with the evolution of all three.